



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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WENDY L. WATANABE
CHIEF DEPUTY

July 5, 2007

TO: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: J. Tyler McCauley
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **GROUP HOME PROGRAM MONITORING REPORT – MURRELL'S
FARM AND BOYS HOME - HANSTEAD HOUSE AND SHANNON
HOUSE GROUP HOMES**

We have completed a review of Hanstead House and Shannon House Group Homes (Group Home or Agency) operated by Murrell's Farm and Boys Home. Each Group Home contracts with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Probation Department (Probation).

Hanstead House Group Home is a six-bed facility, which provides care for boys ages 12-17 years who exhibit behavioral, social, and emotional difficulties. Shannon House Group Homes is a six-bed facility which provides care for boys ages 13-17 years who exhibit behavioral, social, and emotional difficulties. At the time of the monitoring visit, Hanstead House and Shannon House Group Homes were each providing services for six DCFS children.

Hanstead House and Shannon House Group Homes are located in the Fifth District.

Scope of Review

The purpose of the review is to determine whether the Agency is providing the services as outlined in their Program Statement. Additionally, the review covers basic child safety and licensing issues and includes an evaluation of the Agency's Program

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Statement, internal policies and procedures, child case records, a facility inspection, and interviews with children placed in the Group Home at the time of the review. Interviews with children are designed to obtain their perspectives on the program services provided by the Agency and to ensure adherence to the Foster Youth Bill of Rights.

Summary of Findings

Generally, the Agency is providing the services as outlined in their Program Statement. The Agency needs to address several deficient areas.

Both Group Homes need to replace broken kitchen counter tiles, maintain current Needs and Services Plans that are comprehensive and include all members of the treatment team in the development and implementation of the Needs and Services Plans.

Hanstead House Group Home needs to provide adequate landscape in the front and back yards, repair the patio slab, secure a protruding pipe, and replace missing window screens. Additionally, the Group Home needs to repair the damaged sofas. The Group Home also needs to maintain a sufficient quantity of age-appropriate casual reading material, provide children with additional educational support and resources, and ensure children taking psychotropic medications are routinely seen by the prescribing psychiatrist and are informed about their medication.

Shannon House Group Home needs to secure the exterior TV cable, repair or replace the kitchen sink, repair the exercise bench and secure weightlifting plates. The Group Home also needs to encourage and assist all children in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.

Attached is a detailed report of the review.

Review of Report

We discussed our report with the Agency's management. In response to the recommendations made in the report, the Agency's management completed a corrective action plan (attached) which we approved. We thank the management and staff for their cooperation during our review.

Board of Supervisors

July 5, 2007

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If you have any questions, please contact me or have your staff contact Mike Pirolo at (626) 293-1110.

JTM:MP:CC:dl

Attachments

c: David E. Janssen, Chief Executive Officer
Patricia S. Ploehn, Director, DCFS
Robert B. Taylor, Chief Probation Officer
Emmett Murrell, Executive Director, Murrell's Farm and Boys Home
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

**Murrell's Farm and Boys Home
Hanstead House Group Home
44423 East Hanstead Avenue
Lancaster, California 93534
Phone: (661) 726-4438
License Number: 197606254
Rate Classification Level: 11**

I. Facility and Environment

Method of assessment – Observation

Comments:

Hanstead House Group Home is located in a residential community. The exterior of the Group Home is clean. However, the front yard lawn is sparse and dry and the back yard is barren and lacks landscaping. The patio slab is cracked and uneven. A section of an irrigation pipe is protruding above the ground by the patio slab, which creates a safety hazard.

Overall, the interior of the Group Home is well maintained. The common quarters are neat and clean. There is adequate lighting in the Group Home. The Group Home provides a home-like environment. However, the sofas in the TV room have holes in the upholstery. A tiled section on the kitchen counter is broken and has a sharp edge, which creates a safety hazard. Window screens are missing from the main bathroom.

Children's bedrooms are well maintained. The rooms are clean and orderly and have age-appropriate personalized decorations. There is adequate furniture, lighting, and storage space. Window coverings are in good repair. However, window screens are missing from the bedroom windows. The mattresses are comfortable, and the beds all have a full complement of linens. Children's sleeping arrangements are appropriate.

The Group Home maintains age appropriate and accessible recreational equipment. There are also board games, a TV, and an electronic game. Resource materials, including a computer with a variety of programs, are also available. However, the Group Home does not maintain a sufficient amount of casual reading material for the children.

The Group Home maintains a sufficient supply of perishable and non perishable foods.

Recommendations

1. Murrell's Farm and Boys Home management:

- a. Provide adequate landscape in the front and back yards.**

- b. Repair the patio slab in the back yard.**
- c. Secure the protruding section of irrigation pipe in the back yard.**
- d. Replace the missing window screens in the bathroom and bedrooms.**
- e. Repair or replace the damaged sofas in the TV room.**
- f. Replace the broken section of tile in the kitchen.**
- g. Maintain a sufficient supply of age-appropriate casual books and reading materials for the children's use.**

II. Program Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

Comments:

Children meet the Group Home's population criteria as outlined in their Program Statement. Children are assessed for needed services within thirty days of placement.

The Needs and Services Plans (NSP) for one child is current. However, the NSP is not comprehensive and does not include short term goals. The other child does not have a current NSP. Additionally, input from all members of the treatment team and the child is not included in the development and implementation of the NSPs.

Case files reflect adequate documentation to show that children are receiving treatment services.

Recommendations

2. Murrell's Farm and Boys Home management:

- a. Maintain current and comprehensive Needs and Services Plans that are measurable and include short term goals for all children.**
- b. Include input from all members of the treatment team and the child in the development and implementation of the Needs and Services Plans.**

III. Educational and Emancipation Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

Comments:

Children are attending school. Children are provided with educational support and resources. However, both children are frequently being suspended from school and are not achieving satisfactory grades in school.

The Group Home's program includes the development of children's daily living, self-help, and survival skills.

Children are provided with opportunities to participate in emancipation and vocational programs as appropriate.

Recommendations

- 3. Murrell's Farm and Boys Home management provide additional educational support and resources to assist children in making sufficient progress in school.**

IV. Recreation and Activities

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

Comments:

The Group Home provides children with sufficient recreational activities and leisure time. Children are provided with opportunities to participate in planning activities. Children also participate in extra-curricular, enrichment, and social activities in which they have an interest.

The Group Home provides transportation to and from the activities.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

V. Psychotropic Medication

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents

Comments:

Children have current court authorizations for psychotropic medication. However, documentation for one child taking psychotropic medication does not confirm that he is routinely seen by the prescribing psychiatrist for the medication that he is taking.

Children are aware of their right to refuse medication. However, one child reports that he has not been informed about the psychotropic medication that he is taking.

Medication distribution logs are properly maintained.

Recommendations

4. Murrell's Farm and Boys Home management:

- a. Maintain documentation to show that all children taking psychotropic medication are routinely seen by the prescribing psychiatrist.**
- b. Ensure that all children taking psychotropic medication have been informed about the medication they are taking.**

VI. Personal Rights

Method of assessment – Interviews with children

Sample size: Two

Comments:

Children are informed about the Group Home's policies and procedures. Children report that they feel safe in the Group Home and are provided with appropriate staff supervision. Children express satisfaction with the quality of their interactions with staff and report that the staff treats them with respect and dignity.

Children report that they are assigned chores that are reasonable and not too demanding. Children are able to make and receive personal telephone calls, send and receive unopened mail, and have private visitors. Children are able to attend religious services of their choice.

Children report that the discipline policies are consistently enforced and that there are fair and appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior.

Children report satisfaction with meals and snacks.

Children receive voluntary medical, dental, and psychiatric care.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

VII. Clothing and Allowance

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

Comments:

The Group Home provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity, and the required \$50 monthly clothing allowance to children. Children are provided with opportunities to select their own clothes. Clothing provided to children is of good quality and of sufficient quantity.

The Group Home provides children with the required minimum weekly allowance. Children spend their allowances as they choose.

The Group Home provides children with adequate personal care items. Children are also encouraged and assisted in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

**Murrell's Farm and Boys Home
Shannon House Group Home
823 East Pillsbury Street
Lancaster, California 93534
Phone: (661) 942-2035
License Number: 197606874
Rate Classification Level: 11**

I. Facility and Environment

Method of assessment – Observation

Comments:

Shannon House Group Home is located in a residential community. The exterior of the Group Home is well maintained. The front and back yards are clean and adequately landscaped. However, the exterior TV cable wiring is not properly attached to the house.

Overall, the interior of the Group Home is well maintained. The common quarters are neat and clean. There is adequate furniture and lighting in the Group Home. The Group Home provides a home-like environment. However, the kitchen sink is chipping around the drain and a tiled section on the kitchen counter is broken, both have sharp edges and are a safety hazard.

Children's bedrooms are well maintained. The rooms are clean and orderly and have age-appropriate personalized decorations. There is adequate furniture, lighting, and storage space. Window coverings and window screens are in good repair. The mattresses are comfortable, and the beds all have a full complement of linens. Children's sleeping arrangements are appropriate.

The Group Home maintains age appropriate and accessible recreational equipment. However, the weightlifting equipment weight plates are not properly secured when not in use and the backrest on the exercise machine is not properly padded.

There are also board games, a TV, and an electronic game. Books and resource materials, including a computer with a variety of programs, are also available.

The Group Home maintains a sufficient supply of perishable and non perishable foods.

Recommendations

1. Murrell's Farm and Boys Home management:

a. Secure the TV cable to the house.

- b. Repair or replace the damaged sink in the kitchen.**
- c. Replace the section of broken tile in the kitchen.**
- d. Properly secure the weight plates when not in use.**
- e. Repair the backrest on the exercise machine.**

II. Program Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

Comments:

Children meet the Group Home's population criteria as outlined in their Program Statement. Children are assessed for needed services within thirty days of placement.

The Needs and Services Plans (NSP) for one child is current. However, the NSP is not comprehensive and does not include short term goals. The other child does not have a current NSP. Additionally, input from all members of the treatment team and the child is not included in the development and implementation of the NSPs.

Case files reflect adequate documentation to show that children are receiving treatment services.

Recommendations

2. Murrell's Farm and Boys Home management:

- a. Maintain current and comprehensive Needs and Services Plans that are measurable and include short term goals for all children.**
- b. Include input from all members of the treatment team and the child in the development and implementation of the Needs and Services Plans.**

III. Educational and Emancipation Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

Comments:

One child is attending school. The child is provided with educational support and resources to meet his educational needs and is progressing satisfactorily in school. The other child has received his diploma and is seeking employment. The Group Home's program includes the development of children's daily living, self-help, and survival skills.

Children are provided with opportunities to participate in emancipation and vocational programs as appropriate.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

IV. Recreation and Activities

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

Comments:

The Group Home provides children with sufficient recreational activities and leisure time. Children are provided with opportunities to participate in planning activities. Children also participate in extra-curricular, enrichment, and social activities in which they have an interest.

The Group Home provides transportation to and from the activities.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

V. Psychotropic Medication

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents

Comments:

According to the Agency's management, there are currently no children taking psychotropic medications. This information is appropriately documented.

Children are aware of their right to refuse medication.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

VI. Personal Rights

Method of assessment – Interviews with children

Sample size: Two

Comments:

Children are informed about the Group Home's policies and procedures. Children report that they feel safe in the Group Home and are provided with appropriate staff supervision. Children express satisfaction with the quality of their interactions with staff and report that the staff treats them with respect and dignity.

Children report that they are assigned chores that are reasonable and not too demanding. Children are able to make and receive personal telephone calls, send and receive unopened mail, and have private visitors. Children are able to attend religious services of their choice.

Children report that the discipline policies are consistently enforced and that there are fair and appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior.

Children report satisfaction with meals and snacks.

Children receive voluntary medical, dental, and psychiatric care.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

VII. Clothing and Allowance

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

Comments:

The Group Home provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity, and the required \$50 monthly clothing allowance to children. Children are provided with opportunities to select their own clothes. Clothing provided to children is of good quality and of sufficient quantity.

The Group Home provides children with the required minimum weekly allowance. Children spend their allowances as they choose.

The Group Home provides children with adequate personal care items. However, children report that they are not encouraged or assisted in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.

Recommendations

- 3. Murrell's Farm and Boys Home management encourage and assist children in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.**

To: Candace Rhue, Group Home Audit Supervisor
Los Angeles County, Department of Auditor-Controller

From: Murrell's Farm & Boys Homes

RE: Corrective Action Plan for Audit – January 22, 07
This is an Addendum to the (CAP) April 10, 2007

The Corrective Action Plan (CAP) has been implemented as follows for the Hanstead House located at 44423 Hanstead St. Lancaster CA. 93535 (License # 197606254).

Recommendation

1. Murrell's Farm & Boys Home Management:

- a. Provide adequate landscape in the front and backyard.

Corrective Action Plan

Murrell's Farm & Boys Home Management has hired a handy man to start the landscaping on the front and back yard the approximate date for the landscaping work to start is April 10, 2007 and finished by June 30, 2007.

Recommendation

- b. Repair the patio slab in the backyard.

Corrective Action Plan

The handy man that Murrell's has hired will start the process of repairing the patio slab approximately May 2007 and finished by approximately July 2007.

Recommendation

- c. Bury the protruding section of irrigation pipe in the back yard.

Corrective Action Plan

The handy man will cut and cap the irrigation pipe by approximately April 10, 2007.

Recommendation

- d. Replace the missing window screens as needed.

Corrective Action Plan

All the window screens were replaced on January 30, 2007 and will be monitored every day by Group Home Facility Manager and staff to ensure all window screens are properly maintained.

Recommendation

- e. Repair or replace the damaged sofas in the TV room.

Corrective Action Plan

Temporary sofa covers were bought for the sofas, sofas will be replaced by Approximately by May 30, 07.

Recommendation

- f. Replace the broken section of tile in the kitchen.

Corrective Action Plan

The Facility Manager taped off the broken tile for safety purposes tile will be replaced by approximately May 2007.

Recommendation

- g. Maintain a sufficient supply of age- appropriate casual books and reading materials.

Corrective Action Plan

Age-appropriate casual books and reading materials were put in place at the Site, we have also ordered more reading materials from Delaney Educational Enterprises, Inc. Delaney Rep: Carrie Gordon Phone Number: (661) 252-4385

The facility is reviewed by the facility manager and or staff on a daily basis to Ensure that all is in good repair, a work order form has been put in place for Immediate attention to anything that is found out of repair.

2. Murrell's Farm and Boys Home management:

- a. Maintain current and comprehensive Needs and Services Plans that are measurable, and include short-term goals.

Corrective Action Plan

Murrell's Farm and Boys Home has contracted LMT Josie Montgomery to Correct and continue to meet the guidelines of our Needs and Service Plans, Quarterly's and she will be including measurable and effective short-term Goals. This was implemented by March 15, 2007

Recommendation

- b. Include input from all members of the treatment team, including the child, Placement worker, staff and therapist in the development and implementation of the Needs and Services Plans.

Corrective Action plan

A form has been developed to invite the clients CSW to participate in the Treatment Planning. This form will be faxed to the CSW a fax receipt and a fax cover letter will be filed in the clients record. Staff, Therapist, and other Treatment team members will be documented as to participation in the treatment team meetings by use of a signature page and attached to the Needs and Service Plan. This was implemented by March 15, 2007.

Recommendations

3. Murrell's Farm and Boys Home management provide additional educational support and resources to assist children in making progress in school.

Corrective Action Plan

Murrell's Farm and Boys Home is associated with the Los Angeles County Title One Program and they provide us with a Title One Teacher Ms, Melwyn Johnson and she is on site 2 days out of the week for tutoring Services we also have an appointment with Amy Coal the representative From Kumon Learning Center located at 42001 50th ST. west Quartz Hill CA. 93536 Phone Number (661) 943-4476 to enroll our clients for Reading, math, ECT. We will also enroll and encourage clients to attend After school, tutoring program offered to them by the school they attend. The facility manager and staff will oversee that this takes place.

Recommendations

4. Murrell's Farm and Boys Home management:

- a. Maintain documentation to show that all children taking psychotropic medication are routinely seen by the prescribing psychiatrist.

Corrective Action Plan

Dr. Apura V. Shah PhD MD will see all clients on psychotropic Medication on a monthly basis.

- b. Ensure that all children taking psychotropic medication have been Informed about the medication they are taking.

Corrective Action Plan

All children taking psychotropic medication will be informed by the prescribing physician before the medication is given to ensure the child of what and why he is taking medications.

Guadalupe Rascon (Lupe) Administrator Assistant will be responsible for monitoring the corrective plan.

CEO Emmett Murrell

Signature: Emmett Murrell Date: 4-13-07

TO: Candace Rhue, Group Home Audit Supervisor
Los Angeles County, Department of Auditor-Controller

From: Murrell's Farm & Boys Home

RE: Corrective Action Plan for Audit- (1-23-07
This is an addendum to (CAP) April 10, 2007

The Corrective Action Plan (CAP) has been implemented as follows for the Murrell's Farm & Boys Home (Shannon House Group Home) located at 823 Pillsbury St. Lancaster California 93535 (License # 197606874):

1. Recommendation

Murrell's Farm & boys Home management:

1 a. Secure TV cable to the building exterior.

Corrective Action Plan

Management has safely secured the TV cable to the exterior of the building by clamping the cable to the roof on approximately January 29, 07

1b. Recommendation

Repair or replace the damaged sink in the kitchen.

Corrective Action Plan

The kitchen sink was replaced on 3-31-07

1c. Recommendation

Replace the section of broken tile in the kitchen.

Corrective Action Plan

The section of the broken tile was replaced on 3-31-07

1d. Recommendation

Secure weight plates when not in use or supervised.

Corrective Action Plan

Weight Plates have now been secured by being locked up in the garage and only being used under staff supervision.

1e. Recommendation

Repair the backrest on the exercise equipment.

Corrective Action Plan

The exercise equipment was disposed of on approximately 2-2-07.

The facility is reviewed by the facility manager and or staff on a daily basis to ensure that all is in good repair, a work order form has been put in place for immediate attention to any thing that is found out of repair.

Recommendations

2. Murrell's Farm & Boys Home management:

- a. Maintain current and comprehensive Needs and Services Plans that are measurable, and include short-term goals.

Corrective Action Plan

Murrell's Farm and Boys Home has contracted LMFT Josie Montgomery to correct and continue to meet the guidelines of our Needs and Service Plans, Quarterly's and she will be including measurable and effective short-term goals. Was implemented by March 15, 2007.

- b. Include input from all members of the treatment team, including the child placement worker, staff, and therapist in the development and implementation of the Needs and Service Plans.

Corrective Action Plan

A form has been developed to invite the clients CSW to participate in the Treatment Planning. This form will be faxed to the CSW a fax receipt and a fax cover letter will be filed in the clients record. Staff, Therapist, and other Treatment Team Members will be documented as to participation in the Treatment team meetings by use of signature page and attached to the Needs and Service Plans. This was implemented by March 15 2007.

Recommendations

3. Murrell's Farm and Boys Home management encourage and assist children in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.

Corrective Action Plan

The group home facility manager and staff will encourage and assist clients in creating and maintaining photo albums and life books, disposable cameras, photo albums have been purchased, facility manager as well as staff will be responsible for taking pictures of the clients during special occasions and outings. The clients will be given photos to keep in their albums. The House Supervisor (Facility Manager) and Program Director will monitor that this is done on an ongoing basis.

Guadalupe Rascon Administrator Assistant will be responsible for monitoring the corrective plan.

CEO Emmett Murrell

Signature: 

Date:

4-19-07